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EDITORIAL

Workmen's Compensation

A NEW ERA of responsibility and trust for the medical profession in the administration of the workmen's compensation laws of the state has again been proposed by the California Medical Association.

The proposal has come in two appearances of C.M.A. representatives before the Governor's "blue ribbon" Workmen's Compensation Study Commission. This body has been named to take a close look at the entire structure of the Industrial Accident Commission and its processing of the laws relating to workmen injured in the course of their employment.

What the C.M.A. has proposed is that a medical administrative division be set up within the Industrial Accident Commission, to have as its responsibilities the supervision of all aspects of the compensation law relating to medical care, rehabilitative services, determination of disability, establishment of fees to be paid to physicians and the determination or certification of medical facts in litigated cases.

This division would be headed by a medical administrator, who would have access to a broadly-based medical advisory committee. Findings of medical fact by this division would be binding upon all referees and the members of the Industrial Accident Commission in the absence of substantial evidence to the contrary.

At this time we have no way of knowing how the "blue ribbon" commission will handle this proposal but we are confident that its acceptance and imple-

mentation would be extremely cheerful news to the vast majority of physicians in California.

The state's Industrial Accident Commission was established more than 50 years ago following passage of laws which held that society as a whole is responsible for disabling injuries suffered by any employed person. These laws placed upon the employer the immediate responsibility for seeing that the injured workman received all needed medical and hospital care and provided that the injured workman should be paid damages, in lieu of wages, during his period of disability.

When these laws were first enacted the position of the medical profession was that this was a matter of politics, not medicine, and that physicians should keep hands off. This position left the way wide open for the adoption of a schedule of minimum fees to be paid physicians for their treatment of industrial injury cases. These fees, admittedly low, were stated to be based on the fees a physician might expect to receive in his private practice from a patient then earning an average of \$1,000 a year. Please remember, this was in 1912.

In 1921 it was calculated that the average earnings of those workmen covered by the law were \$1,250 a year and the medical minimum fee schedule was increased by 25 per cent. Since that time no attention has been paid to the average earnings of the covered employees.

No change occurred in medical fees in compensation cases until the years of World War II, when the insurance carriers voluntarily added a 15 per cent "surcharge" to the fees they paid. What percentage of this added amount represented bidding in an extremely tight medical market, with one-third of all practicing physicians having gone to war, and what percentage to guilt feelings by the insurance carriers can only be a guess. Nevertheless, the "surcharge" remained in effect until the C.M.A. started to campaign for increased medical fees in the 40's and waited more than four years before any progress was recorded. Since then some changes have been made in the state laws and changes in the medical

In Memoriam

BECKER, SAMUEL WILLIAM, Long Beach. Died August 15, 1964, in Hollywood, aged 70. Graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, 1921. Licensed in California in 1956. Doctor Becker was an associate member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

BEDDOE, PAUL, Alhambra. Died August 11, 1964, in Pasadena, aged 72, of acute myocardial infarction—coronary disease. Graduate of Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, Ohio, 1929. Licensed in California in 1937. Doctor Beddoe was a retired member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association and the California Medical Association, and an associate member of the American Medical Association.

COTTRELL, JOHN C., Long Beach. Died September 2, 1964, in Long Beach, aged 62. Graduate of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver, 1926. Licensed in California in 1929. Doctor Cottrell was a member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

CUNNINGHAM, TERENCE THOMAS, JR., Huntington Park. Died August 16, 1964, in Downey, aged 48, of myocardial infarction. Graduate of Marquette University School of Medicine, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1942. Licensed in California in 1943. Doctor Cunningham was a member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

CUTTER, RICHARD DEDRICH, Palo Alto. Died August 13, 1964, in Palo Alto, aged 55, of heart disease. Graduate of

Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto-San Francisco, 1935. Licensed in California in 1935. Doctor Cutter was a member of the Santa Clara County Medical Society.

DAVIS, HARRY WILLIAM, San Francisco. Died August 30, 1964, in San Francisco, aged 68, of coronary thrombosis. Graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of San Francisco, 1920. Licensed in California in 1920. Doctor Davis was a member of the San Francisco Medical Society.

HALL, COLBY, Encino. Died September 6, 1964, in Ventura, aged 59, of heart disease. Graduate of Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri, 1927. Licensed in California in 1930. Doctor Hall was a member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

HUFF, MIRIAM POOL, Los Angeles. Died August 16, 1964, in Los Angeles. Graduate of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine, Omaha, 1923. Licensed in California in 1928. Doctor Huff was a retired member of the Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association and the California Medical Association, and an associate member of the American Medical Association.

HUTCHINSON, EMERSON J., Los Angeles. Died August 19, 1964, aged 53. Graduate of the College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, 1934. Licensed in California in 1934. M.D. degree from California College of Medicine, 1962. Doctor Hutchinson was a member of the Forty First Medical Society.

HUTCHINSON, MARTIN, Santa Rosa. Died August 15, 1964, in San Francisco, aged 50, of a coronary. Graduate of the University of California School of Medicine, Berkeley-San Francisco, 1940. Licensed in California in 1940. Doctor Hutchinson was a member of the Sonoma County Medical Society.

LARSEN, JEAN M., Chula Vista. Died in an automobile accident August 25, 1964, in Mexico, aged 50. Graduate of the College of Medical Evangelists, Loma Linda—Los Angeles, 1939. Licensed in California in 1948. Doctor Larsen was a member of the San Diego County Medical Society.

LINEER, ALCOT SIEGFRIED, Los Angeles. Died August 25, 1964, in Los Angeles, aged 71, of heart failure secondary to pneumonectomy for carcinoma. Graduate of the University of Minnesota Medical School, Minneapolis, 1920. Licensed in California in 1921. Doctor Lineer was a member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

MCBRIDE, REXFORD WILLIAM, San Mateo. Died August 26, 1964, in San Mateo, aged 65, of heart disease. Graduate of Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto-San Francisco, 1927. Licensed in California in 1927. Doctor McBride was a member of the San Mateo County Medical Society.

WILSON, P. EDWARD, Pasadena. Died August 5, 1964, in Pasadena, aged 63, of a coronary. Graduate of the College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, Los Angeles, 1936. Licensed in California in 1936. M.D. degree from the California College of Medicine, 1962. Doctor Wilson was a member of the Forty First Medical Society.

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August 7, 1964

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